



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Ellen Nash
202-452-9446
Mary Beth Mueller
412-622-6453

Can America Compete in the 21st Century? **PBS Debuts "JOBS:THE CLASS OF 2000"** **Hosted By Cokie Roberts on Sept. 20, 1996**

*See How Six U.S. Communities Are Expanding the Walls of the Classroom
to Create Promising New Job Opportunities*

WQED Pittsburgh
2 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
800.876.1316
412.622.6413
<http://www.pbs.org/jobs>

Pittsburgh, PA — On Friday, September 20, 1996 at 10:00 p.m. (ET), PBS will premiere a groundbreaking, one-hour education television special answering a question that affects us all: Can America win the race to fill the high-skill, high-tech, highly competitive jobs of the 21st century? Hosted by ABC News correspondent Cokie Roberts and produced by award-winning WQED Pittsburgh, **JOBS:THE CLASS OF 2000** explores "School To Work," a new grassroots movement that is crossing traditional boundaries in education, creating inspiring success stories and blazing new career opportunities for young people.

Currently, the United States is the only industrialized country that does not have a system for offering its students career preparation and training. Forty-two states and 81 communities now offer "School To Work," which seeks to forge stronger links between America's education and workforce development training.

"While politicians are trying to figure out what to do about the enormous prospects for change in jobs and education in the 21st Century, a quiet trend is altering the face of communities across America," Ms. Roberts said. "**JOBS:THE CLASS OF 2000** examines six American communities that are solving their education and job market problems by focusing on how everyone can win."

In a lively, engaging format, the program takes viewers into the lives of students who will join the workforce as we enter the year 2000. The documentary features educators, business leaders, labor representatives, parents and community leaders who are collaborating to better prepare students for college and careers in the 21st Century.

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Viewers will travel across the United States, from “School To Work” student-run farming and robotics ventures in Oregon, to a demanding radiation therapy internship in Boston to the challenging world of feature animation in Los Angeles. Some of the students featured in the program include:

- Ben Borens, 20, who went from a 2.0 grade point average out of high school to a 4.0 grade point average during his second year in college through Tulsa’s Craftsmanship 2000 program. He applies classroom lessons at work where he operates million-dollar machinery and learns “something different every day.”
- Michelle Boyd, 20, a single mother who, as a participant in Boston’s ProTech program, discovered she wanted to prepare herself to face the challenges of the health care field. She is now one of the top students attending the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and will soon be a radiation therapist.
- Joanna Carman, 18, is an aspiring young journalist at the *McKeesport Daily News* in Pittsburgh. Before her apprenticeship, Joanna knew she loved to write but was unsure of what careers existed for writers. Working at the *Daily News*, the world of journalism opened up to her and she now focuses on writing as her career. She recently received her first byline and looks forward to future assignments.

“As America approaches the 21st Century, young people across the country are entering the labor market without the skills necessary to succeed in today’s changing economy. At the same time, employers are having difficulty finding the trained workers they need to compete,” said George Miles, Jr., WQED Pittsburgh’s President and Chief Executive Officer. “It is our hope that **JOBS:THE CLASS OF 2000** will raise public awareness about education and employment opportunities that can be created by communities so we as a nation can remain competitive in the 21st century.”

“Working on this television documentary, we visited communities around the country and discovered that the students, educators and community leaders involved in the growing ‘School To Work’ movement are the most eloquent experts on how it works and why it’s so important,” said Mary Rawson, the show’s producer.

The country’s first community-owned public television station, WQED Pittsburgh, has achieved worldwide recognition for children’s programming and video tools for the classroom. In addition to producing *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*, the highest rated show for school-age children in PBS history, the station has produced many other nationally acclaimed programs for PBS.

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